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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 002503

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, EB/TPP, WHA/CEN, WHA/EPSC, WHA/PDA
AMEMBASSIES FOR PAS, POL, USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR ES KPAO HURRICANE KATRINA](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON HURRICANE KATRINA

The chaotic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina inspired Salvadoran newspaper commentators to express sympathy and solidarity as well as concern about the possible economic repercussions of Katrina on El Salvador, in particular given already high fuel prices. They also criticized inadequate prevention measures and, directly or indirectly, admonished Salvadoran authority to learn from U.S. mistakes and thereby lessen the impact of the next natural disaster that sooner or later will befall El Salvador.

For his weekly column in El Diario de Hoy (far right, circ. 100,000) on Saturday, September 3, Eduardo Torres wrote:

"It would be very, very unfortunate if in the face of this terrible human tragedy, particular sectors continue to play politics with the issue of international petroleum prices, as they were doing before Katrina."

Weekly El Diario de Hoy columnist Pedro Roque wrote on September 4 about "New Orleans, City of Jazz":

"If the United States -- with its large economic power, reserve funds for disasters, rescue procedures and technology -- is having serious problems and needs aid, imagine how we would have been after a hurricane with 200 km per hour winds and strong rains.. Regardless of a country's location, size, religious beliefs, or economic system, none is safe from the forces of Mother Nature. I hope that here we prepares ourselves well with information management and preventive measures for what could happen."

The September 6 editorial in La Prensa Grafica (center right, circ. 110,000) opined:

"In this era of growing communication and interdependence between regions and countries, great disasters are no longer confined to the areas they occupy. Today, chain reactions are regionalized and globalized.. No one is self-sufficient.. Now that we are tied to the U.S. economy by the umbilical cord of dollarization, everything that happens there will have direct repercussions on our process of internal (economic) reactivation, which is already complicated enough."

Also in La Prensa Grafica on September 6, columnist Roberto Turcios opined: "Iraq comes up as an inevitable reference in commentaries about the tragedy. Two, three, and four days without assistance to people needing water, food, and security says a lot about a government that maintains military operations in faraway continents.. In the recent catastrophe, we have seen what a distance there is between efficiency in pursuit of military goals and ineffectiveness in the face of suffering."

The September 7 editorial in El Diario de Hoy, entitled "The Haitianization of New Orleans," commented:

"Inside the shelters of New Orleans each night, rapes and murders occur, elderly people are assaulted, and the worst barbarism is committed.. Unfortunately, for years there have been two cities of New Orleans: the beautiful, hospitable, artistic, interesting, lovely and calm one, and the other that neither residents nor foreign visitors will approach without putting themselves at great risk."

In La Prensa Grafica on September 7, columnist Joaquin Samayoa wrote:

"I know I spoke for almost all Salvadorans when I expressed to (the U.S. Ambassador) our solidarity with the people of that beloved country and also our readiness to help out in whatever ways are necessary and feasible. But it is important that we learn something from this tragedy, because others will occur and some of them will affect us directly.. Who were Katrina's partners in crime? First, there are those who ignore and are indifferent to how we allow and provoke global warming.. Second, there is poverty.. In the affected zones, one of every four residents lives below the poverty line and two out of ten households do not have vehicles. That explains why many had to remain despite the warnings. Finally, Katrina had two more important

supporters that we Salvadorans are familiar with. I am referring to the politicians and bureaucrats who did not make necessary decisions quickly or impeded their being carried out."

In his daily Editor's Column in the September 7 issue of daily paper El Mundo (center right, circ. 35,000), Ricardo Chacon wrote that "The Easiest Thing is Blaming Others:"

"U.S. public opinion has been tough on the Bush Administration for its tardiness, inefficiency, lack of sensitivity, and scarce preparation before the tragedy that occurred in New Orleans.. After a tragedy, the easiest thing is to point the finger and blame everyone else; the difficult thing is to have the vision to avoid disasters."

BUTLER